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Texas College of Industrial Arts  
The Texas State College for Women  
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APPROPRIATE DRESS FOR HIGH  
SCHOOL GIRLS

BY

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COSTUME DESIGN

FINE AND APPLIED ART DEPARTMENT



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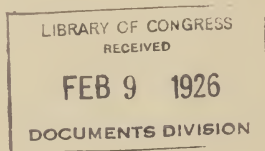
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# APPROPRIATE DRESS FOR HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS

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## INTRODUCTION

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Only yesterday the high school girl's mother indulged in solitary sighs over selecting clothes, and today the daughter sighs with her. In other words, she has suddenly developed a great interest in the costumes she is to wear. She is no longer a child and she is not yet a grown-up. She must have clothes that do not obtrude themselves on her developing personality and at the same time make her feel comfortably confident among the smartly dressed women of her acquaintance.

The general tendency of high school girls to overdress is causing much agitation among mothers and teachers and even among the girls themselves. Consequently much is being done to interest high school girls in beautiful but appropriate clothes.

At present unsuitable school clothes seem to prevail; though they are often pretty, they are often cheap. Spectacular clothes do appeal strongly to a girl's inexperienced judgment. It is easy to buy them, easier, perhaps, than to search for, or to make dresses in better and more individual taste. If the individual taste were strong, probably the more appropriate clothes would be discovered or somehow created, for distinctive clothes certainly exist. But the temptation to see herself looking like a debutante at a tea table instead of a school girl at a desk is stronger in the ordinary girl's heart, and she has not resisted it to a very noticeable extent. Therefore we must strongly protest that such clothes are out of place in a schoolroom.

The keynote to modern costuming is appropriateness to occasion, station, and stage. And certainly the school room is not the place for fanciful clothes. Short sleeves do not look well; elbow length is permissible. The very short sleeve is really bad form in any office, shop, or school room, or on the street, and the sleeveless dress is unspeakably vulgar in such places.

Very short, light, or bright dresses are unsuitable for most high school girls. So are fringes, floating sleeves, panels that catch, exaggerated sashes, and meaningless trifles. Moreover they distract the attention of both the wearer and her associates.

Few people have an unerring instinct for harmony in dress. The rest must rely on rules, principles, and suggestions from the experience of other people for rescue from commonplace and unsuitable clothes.

It is just as easy to dress well as ill, since dress we must. Clothes should be beautiful, useful, and comfortable. Expensive dress is not necessarily good. A limited income should not be a handicap; only more careful consideration is required.

Dress should be a decoration and never an ornamentation. It should never call attention to itself without reference to the wearer, but should add beauty by harmonizing texture, line, and color. Since clothes have a very psychological effect on one, they should be chosen in relation to the natural lines of the body (the proportions should obey those of the figure), to comfort and health of wearer, to background, to materials in use, and to color; above all they should reflect, to a reasonable extent, the character of the wearer.

The long-limbed, short-limbed, small waisted, heavily built can wear the same style becomingly no more generally than they can wear the same color with the best results. One should consider the limitations of her natural outline and then adopt the prevailing mode to the best advantage. There is no ornament like good arrangement, and with proper arrangement one can do much to soften or conceal defects and add charm to good features.

Costume today is gradually being considered not as a fashion but as a decoration in line and color. In our clothes, combining line and color, we are constantly creating designs. These designs are good or bad according to our knowledge or instinct.

In the present vogue simplicity is the watchword, and the best dressed person is the one who understands the art of elimination in costumes. Everything without purpose is without beauty. Each detail should have a reason for being, and should be a part of a harmonious whole.





JUMPER DRESSES





WASHABLE CLASSROOM CLOTHES



Bows that do not tie, stuck aimlessly about a dress, clasps and buckles sewn to parts they cannot unite, buttons that do not have the possibility of buttoning, and lines beginning nowhere and ending nowhere should be eliminated. Decoration in a costume should either accentuate or terminate a structural line in the garment. Interest in the design can be achieved by variety in the spacing and the area.

The girl of high school age has a courageous defense for her own very distinct opinions on dress; although she may listen with a tolerance when her mother points out the great diversity of types and ages, she will not for one instant grant that the elder's viewpoint can be the right one. It is for arguments in negotiating compromises that these suggestions, and those that follow, are offered.

### CLASSROOM CLOTHES

Over dressing is always bad taste, but never more so than in the schoolroom. Suggestions for suitable dresses, however, should not meet with opposition in this age when clothes for every occasion are reduced to the simplest detail.

School dresses should be of sturdy material and of good quality, and should be cut in lines regulated by common sense, by the current mode, and by the individual girl. The texture and color of the material, as well as the design of the garment, should always enhance the wearer. But these dresses should never be so expensive that soiling them should cause spasms of the heart to the girl or to her mother.

School dresses should be designed so that the wearer may have perfect freedom in the use of her body. If action is hampered, the frock is not correct. The one-piece dress in its varied designs has become almost universal because it is most comfortable to wear, and is becoming to nearly every individual. For cold weather, dresses made of serge, tricotine, poiret twill, flannel, and similar materials are appropriate and practical. They may be made distinctive by detachable collars and cuffs, bright wool embroidery, decorative belts, or unusual cuts in design. Flannel and wool challis offer interest in fascinating colors and patterns. Ready-made dresses are rather expensive, but with modern "fool-

proof" patterns unusual and beautiful dresses can be made by those of little experience in sewing.

No costume is quite so pleasing for school as the soft wool or linen dress with a washable guimpe. Because of the possibilities for variations it is suitable and becoming to a wide range of types and ages. The dress may be cut on simple lines with the interest created in the variety of blouses. The boyish sport blouse is for the straight-haired athletic figure, and the full embroidered peasant-like blouse is appropriate for her fluffy haired and more delicately featured classmate.

These blouses should be of a washable material and design or their purpose is defeated. Washable sport silks, madras, batiste, handkerchief linen, and voile are suitable materials and will be a boon to the young girl who still finds her collars and cuffs a responsibility for neatness. A jumper dress is an asset to a wardrobe because blouses of various weights insure comfort in ever-changing temperatures.

The slip-on sweater of the variety not intended for engaging in sports is a popular and practical schoolroom garment. It can be had in beautiful and becoming colors and, if the contrast between the color of the sweater and skirt is not great, the costume is of good design. For personal comfort and for hygienic reasons a blouse should be worn under a slip-on sweater, to say nothing of the fact that the lines created are better. A sweater conforms too closely to the figure if a blouse is not worn underneath.

The sweater with a plaid or striped front and a plain back is not good design because of the concentrated interest. Too often the backs of our costumes are neglected. Since the young girl cannot have the whole world bowing at her feet at all times, she will do well to consider the backs of each costume and its possibilities for interest.

With the coming of spring and warm weather we would say that the hardy perennial among fabrics is assuredly gingham, for it "wears like iron" and is always clean and wholesome-looking. These and other practical wash materials like linen, percale, and English print can be had in intriguing colors and patterns so



SIMPLE WOOLEN DRESSES







SWEATERS AND SKIRTS FOR CLASSROOM WEAR



that any type may find colors and designs that will not prove fatal to her coloring or figure.

Plaids have a tendency to make a very stout figure resemble an "animated sofa," while stripes in the same material and used ingeniously may have a slenderizing effect; indeed, bold plaids or pattern on an extremely slender and delicate figure are overpowering; so they are in just as poor taste. Combinations of plain and figured materials may make the use of either of these materials possible for extreme figures.

In warm weather brighter colors and gayer patterns than were suggested for winter are appropriate, but transparent materials that show underwear crumpled from the heat are always unsuitable for the schoolroom or street.

Underwear and accessories are not to be forgotten in the planning of the school outfit. Simplicity is again the rule, tailored effects, and a minimum of lace and ribbon and embroidery. In their stead there should be correctness of cut, good workmanship, and quality of material that will stand wear and laundering. All garments should give freedom of movement and correct lines to the frocks worn over them.

Shoes, stockings, and gloves also necessitate careful consideration. Bad weather is not unusual and high-heeled satin and patent leather slippers are not comfortable or hygienic; therefore, they are inappropriate on the street or at school. Shoes should be of the best of leather with substantial soles and wide, flat heels. Shoes cut on the lines of Oxford ties, one-strap pumps, or their equivalent are appropriate, practical, and hygienic. Correct stockings to accompany these shoes are of heavy ribbed English cotton or lisle, wool sport hose, or silk for more formal wear. Whether they be socks or full length stockings must be determined by the length of the legs to wear them. For either case they are best in black or brown for school.

Gloves should be cut on plain and mannish line of suede, calfskin, or dogskin for everyday wear. Natural chamois is also appropriate. It has the advantage of being washable and the disadvantage of having to be washed frequently. Without gloves

no one looks well groomed, and they protect the hands even in mild weather.

### THE CROWNING GLORY

Hair is so tangled with history and romance it is not amiss to discuss it and its present mode. The heads of the present generation, both young and old, have been victims of the shears, without reserve. Nevertheless, lovely hair continues as the perfect frame for a beautiful face. Some few who indulge in "bobs" suffer as deplorably as did Samson from Delilah's shears, but many more find their shorn locks quite as becoming as their more troublesome long ones. Most of those enjoying this newly-acquired freedom declare emphatically that the bob will never be renounced. But the untiring interest in new things and the lingering traditions about hair as a feminine aspect may cause the most defiant shingle to undergo a restoration of hair nets and hair pins in an incredibly short while. About that no one knows!

No other detail adds as much or detracts as much from any one's appearance as one's hair. Even short hair must be considered seriously if it is properly cared for and arranged becomingly. To look best one should consider the modeling of the face, full view and profile, the neck, and the shape and back of one's head. Then the hair should be cut along lines that suit the individual and the shape of the head.

Those fortunate ones blessed with curls can let them follow their natural tendency, but straight hair should have careful study. It is always best from the standpoint of the hair and the looks of the wearer to leave the hair natural. Results from artificially curled hair are never very satisfactory. Aside from the injury hot irons do the hair, one has a tendency to wonder if there are as many wrinkles in the brain as in the marcel wave.

By studying the face from side to side, the modeling, the setting of the eyes, the breadth and form of the brow, and the length and inclination of the nose, one knows not to accentuate a square chin by repeating the same line in bangs, or draping limp hair from a middle part around a thin face. The contour of hair, long or short, should never distort the shape of the head. A perfectly bald forehead is rarely becoming, but if so, is very distinc-



A STREET ENSEMBLE





A "HOME" DRESS





tive. A few soft hairs over the brow will lend charm to even a perfect forehead.

Combs of the correct shape worn in the middle back of the head add height to a figure. while short, broad combs at the side of the head tend to make a slender face seem wider.

Hair around slender faces should always be soft and low to conceal the angular lines of the face and make it seem wider. Around a broad face hair should be arranged in a soft line, but reasonably flat, and if long, in a high coiffure.

Elaborate coiffures and ornaments in the hair are not appropriate at school or on the street. Bobbed hair in any line is a relief after the almost architectural arrangements which prevailed before the advent of short hair.

## CLOTHES FOR THE STREET

If a girl is convinced in favor of simple clothes for school, she, with little argument can recognize the inappropriateness of elaborate ones for the street. Here, she should want to be as inconspicuous as possible and will choose street clothes in conservative colors and design. This does not mean that her street clothes are not to be even more interesting than her school things, but they should not be a blatant note as she mingles with people in public places.

It is very comforting to youthful pride to know that in clothes grown-up tendencies are repeated in lines, colors, and fabrics. A popular and practical costume for all ages is the three-piece or ensemble suit. This combination of a dress and a harmonizing coat gives a correct appearance on the street, and with the coat removed presents its wearer suitably attired for the theatre or an afternoon party.

Accessories have much to do with the smartness of one's general effect. It is not hard to choose a pretty hat or a striking dress or a pair of smart-looking shoes. But generally the pretty hat is impossible with the striking dress and has no relation to the smart-looking shoes. Hats should be chosen in relation to the costumes with which they are to be worn; they generally contribute more to the costume if they are of a contrasting color.

The hat calls particular attention to one's head or face, which should be the most interesting part of the body.

In the spring dark silks replace the wools and are of similar design. Light materials and colors in conservative designs are appropriate for summer clothes. Harmonious accessories should be chosen for each of these different types of costume.

One's "home" clothes are just as important as one's work clothes, for they are often one's "play" clothes. Here, individuality can be expressed in color and design and materials. Silks in becoming colors and made on the lines of modified sport clothes are very useful. These may be worn in the afternoon or evening. More elaborate clothes are necessary in some wardrobes.

Evening dresses demand careful consideration. It is better to have several very simple ones than one elaborate creation. Crepe de chine, chiffon, and georgette crepe in light colors and made on that precious fundamental—simplicity—are appropriate. If the dress is for dancing, the back, which is the part of the costume in greatest evidence, should not be neglected. Flounces, cascades, berthas, and the like make graceful lines on dancing figures. Black should never be chosen by a young person for evening wear. It demands the jewels and make-up to be worn only by an older woman.

For comfort fur coats are now worn by young girls, although only a few years ago they were considered too extravagant and therefore in poor taste. Muskrat, beaver, raccoon, and similar durable furs are most suitable.

## SPORT CLOTHES

Sport clothes must be considered in two groups—those to be worn while one is actually engaging in athletics, and those modified clothes for onlookers which are generally adapted for street and for the schoolroom.

For tennis and golf a short skirt which allows perfect freedom, either pleated or wrap-around, may be worn with a sport blouse and sweater or jacket. Skirts buttoned to the blouse insure against blouses pulling out. So does the combination sport shirt



CLOTHES FOR ATHLETICS





SPORT CLOTHES FOR SPECTATORS



and teddy-bear. A close fitting hat with a brim should protect the eyes. Special shoes are needed in each of these games.

The most perfect details in sport costumes are usually found along the side lines rather than among the participants in games. Brilliant color can be used with the background of sky and land. Fancy sweaters, scarfs, woolen hose, and brogues have assets in that they are comfortable, youthful, healthful, and economical. Sport clothes have an interest in themselves, regardless of our growing enthusiasm over athletics.

### CLOTHES FOR IRREGULAR FIGURES

The current silhouette demands an almost fleshless body and makes us all take inventory of our figures. By the proper use of line and color attractive results in slenderizing can be achieved and "without dieting or exercise." If a figure is really fat, never try to make it look thin by compressing the body or confining the clothes in such a way as to outline the figure clearly. Long lines and what dressmakers call an "easy fit" will help to camouflage bulk. Solid colors in neutral tones have a slenderizing effect. Stripes, checks, plaids, spots, and figures of any kind draw attention to dimensions. Tunics, wide belts, fancy cuffs, round or fluffy collars, pockets, and horizontal trimming must be carefully avoided on any stout figure.

If the attention is drawn in a path from the face down the figure, we have a tendency to disregard the sides of the figure. A very long line is created by a cut in a garment from one shoulder to the opposite hip, and down the side front to the hem. Light vests may be used to hold the interest in the center of the figure. Clinging materials of a dull surface are most becoming to stout figures. Materials of high lustre create pattern in high lights. Matching shoes and hose should always be chosen in order not to accent the feet of the stout figure.

The extremely slender girl finds her difficulties less grave than those of her too plump classmate. It is never wise to try to make a thin figure look other than thin. Fullness, extra material, and widening devices are likely to make the figure seem slimmer by

contrast. Though certain details in costumes make them more becoming, the limitations are few.

Curved lines and horizontal lines have a softening effect on the angular figure. Large collars, wide belts, and sashes, over-blouses, capes, and decorative sleeves are all becoming to the slender figures. Satin, taffeta, organdie, soft silk with fullness, and velvet are appropriate for the slim. Pattern and colors, not over-powering, are for this more fortunate type. Much could be said about neck lines and hat brims, but it is best said in a diagram.

The person with a receding chin should always wear a collar to fill in the back of the neck, if possible, and should choose hats with some brim. The poke bonnet type is never becoming.

Because one hardly imagines a Juliet in glasses, young girls who are compelled to wear spectacles are rather sensitive about the clothes they wear on account of them. Street and sport clothes do not present a great problem. Evening dress is more difficult because one must give up all attempts to imitate types. The Carmen or Pierette characteristics must retire to the background. If one wears glasses, hats are harder to choose. The flower-decked garden hat is of too great a contrast. Sturdy materials and simple trimmings are most becoming. A directly up-turned brim gives undue prominence to the glasses. A down-turned brim throws a shadow on the glasses and keeps any conspicuous play of lights off the lenses.

Wide shoulders can be apparently diminished by the use of a raglan sleeve or an arm hole cut in from the normal arms' eye-line at the end of the shoulder. Narrow shoulders can be made to seem wider by a drop shoulder line. Large hands can be disguised by long sleeves and cuffs that cover part of them.

## THE GRADUATING DRESS

Since graduation terminates the high school career and is its most important event, a discussion of a suitable dress is in order.

For this event, perhaps more than for any other, the high school girl has been over-dressed. She is not yet a debutante and the occasion is informal. Dresses should be chosen accordingly.





A YOUTHFUL PARTY DRESS





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